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Lynne Mattocks Lucas

CBC Newsletter

for members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., ornithological society of the Carolinas

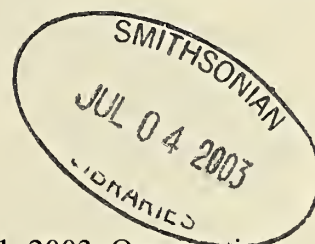
Volume 49

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Number 4

North Carolina Foothills September 19-21

By Dwayne Martin, SC Member-at-large



The next CBC meeting will take place this fall in Hickory, NC September 19-21, 2003. Our meeting headquarters will be the Park Inn/Gateway Conference Center (909 Hwy. 70, SW, Hickory, NC 28602). Rooms with one king or two double beds will be \$66.00 per night, plus 6.5% tax. This rate also includes an expanded continental breakfast and is valid through August 29, 2003. Phone numbers to the inn are 828-328-5101 or 1-800-789-0686.

Planned field trips begin Friday morning. Morning trips will leave between 7-7:30 am and afternoon trips will leave at 1 pm. Please note the all-day trip to Ridge Junction Overlook leaves at 5 am sharp. Registration for the meeting begins at noon on Friday.

The Friday evening program speaker will be CBC member Simon Thompson. Simon, bird guide, naturalist, and owner of Ventures, Inc., will present a workshop on confusing fall warblers. Saturday evening Rob Bierregaard will be our featured speaker. Rob, a biology professor at UNCC, will give a talk on his work with tracking Ospreys via satellite transmitters.

Join us for fall migration in the mountains and foothills!

* Upcoming CBC Meetings *
* Beaufort, SC - Jan. 29-Feb. 1, 2004 *
* Fontana, NC - April 30-May 2, 2004 *
* Augusta, GA - Sept. 24-26, 2004 *

Hickory field trip
descriptions inside
on pages 6-7

Warbled Memories

By Josh Arrants

A few days ago, I was speaking to a third grade class at an elementary school in rural Kershaw County. After trying to answer all the questions that eight-year-olds can hurl at one human, I was asked the one question that I am always presented with. No matter the audience, someone invariably hits me with the one question that all people in our field are asked eventually.

The question is, “Why birds?”

For the answer to that, we have to step back to a warm and muggy morning in April, just a couple of years ago. I had recently started work as an intern with Wildlife Biologist, Steve Lohr. For the first week of duty, Steve drove me around the management area drilling songs and calls into my head. Prior to this job, I had no real interest in birds, so the very act of trying to store and recall what seemed like thousands of bird songs was more than difficult. Steve constantly pointed out vocalizations like, “witchity-witchity-witch” and “teakettle-teakettle.” All I heard was twittering and chirping. All week long, I tried to sort out Bachman-this and Red-eyed-that. I thought my brain was certainly going to explode.

One morning, Steve and I walked into a thick and mosquito-laden Carolina Bay to get some experience in my first transect. My only duty was to see as many birds through the binoculars as possible. That sounded simple enough. I had no idea that my considerable inexperience with binoculars would frustrate me to no avail. Adding to the fact that my aim with the glasses was horrible, we just happened to be facing the sun on our pathway. Needless to say, for the entire transect I squinted and saw nothing but leaves and twigs in the binoculars. After a long and baffling walk, I began to think that I might not want to pursue birds as a career in any way, shape, or form.

The walk back to open territory was to be quite

different. With the glaring morning sun now at our backs, Steve continued to identify birds as I shook my head in sheer amazement. As we walked back, I relaxed and tried to recall some of the millions of calls that were bouncing around in my head. There was no way I was going to take up birding as a hobby or a career.



Just as this thought settled in my mind, Steve caught a glimpse of a male Hooded Warbler as it popped out on the end of a branch. I fumbled the binoculars up to my eyes in an attempt to see it. This time my aim was true, and so was the light. As I looked at this bright yellow bird with the

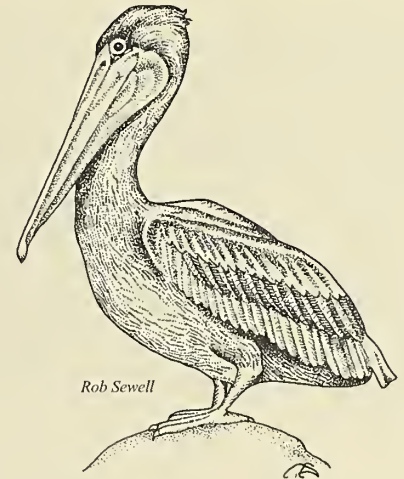
brilliant black hood, all of the frustration melted away. While my jaw dropped open in awe, this handsome fellow perched in front of me and sang his song clearly. Something clicked and from that moment on, I was hooked.

Since then, I have tried to observe and learn as much as possible about birds. Through these last two years, the memory of this experience is what solidified my fascination with birds. I have spoken to many birders since I have begun working in this field, and it seems that quite a few people share a similar memory and experience. One particular bird on one particular day struck a chord that started a journey. Whether it's an Anhinga, an Eastern Bluebird, or a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, I hope each of you can sit back and remember your own moment. Quite possibly, it was before many CBC memories happened.

Editor's note: Josh Arrants, from Cassatt, SC, recently joined CBC. (His name was listed among new members in the last issue.)

Feathered Features

The 7th Annual Wings Over Water Festival takes place **October 14-19, 2003** on North Carolina's Outer Banks. Wings Over Water (WOW) celebrates the wildlife and wild lands in northeastern North Carolina. Field trips, workshops, and interpretive programs are offered for birders, nature enthusiasts, wildlife photographers, and paddlers. Birding, paddling, and natural history trips are planned to places such as Alligator River NWR, Cape Hatteras, Pea Island NWR, Buxton Woods, and Mattamuskeett NWR. Many CBC members are involved with leading field trips, which cost between \$15-\$50. The keynote event (free) for the Festival on October 18 will be *A Sense of Wonder*, an inspirational play about the life of writer and environmentalist, Rachel Carson, performed by Kaiulani Lee. WOW has been designated as one of the main events by the US Fish and Wildlife Service to help celebrate the 2003 Centennial Celebration for the National Wildlife Refuge System. To request a registration form and schedule of events call the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce at 252-441-8144 or check the website at: www.northeast-nc.com/wings.



Project FeederWatch winter finch report findings for the 2002-2003 season noted Evening Grosbeak and Pine Siskin were nearly absent east of the Mississippi River. Purple Finch were seen in only one region of reports east of the Mississippi River, with the bulk of the populations staying north of Virginia and Tennessee. Winter finch reports generally follow a two-year “boom-or-bust” cycle.

Close Encounter with a Chickadee

By Bob Wood

Last spring I was on my knees working in my garden at Lake Wateree (near Camden, SC) when I noticed a Carolina Chickadee sitting on the wire garden fence eight feet away. Something odd about its beak (maybe yellow around the edges) led me to believe that it was a young bird. I pished ever so lightly and got his attention. It seemed interested, so I leaned a little closer. It didn't leave. So I walked on my knees ever so slowly and gradually stuck my arm and ungloved finger toward it. It remained interested. Finally I got my finger on the wire it was perched on, and he jumped on! I then slowly, slowly stood up, looking around desperately for somebody to see what was going on. Nobody was in sight. After about a minute of this, the bird's mother (apparently) appeared and raised hell at the bird and me, and the poor fellow fluttered off. The fluttering flight convinced me beyond doubt that this was a fledgling not yet used to the ways of the world.

The encounter with the chickadee might have been my best-ever wildlife experience.

Special Trinidad and Tobago Venture for CBC Members November 2004

By Simon Thompson

Trinidad offers some of the best introductions to neotropical birding, as well as being a must-visit place for more seasoned travelers. Members of almost all the South American bird families are found here. Unlike many of their mainland haunts, the birds of Trinidad and Tobago are easy to photograph and seem to have little fear of people. With over 430 species, a warm West Indian climate, excellent food, and rich island culture, these twin islands are an absolute favorite birding destination.

The tour will spend seven days on the Island of Trinidad and three on Tobago. While on Trinidad we will stay at the famed Asa Wright Nature Lodge, where the accommodations are wonderful and the food is excellent. From this base we'll take a number of day trips to a variety of habitats. How about a twilight cruise through the Caroni Mangrove Swamp, where we'll watch thousands of Scarlet Ibis fly across from Venezuela to their evening roost, or visit the Aripo Savannah in search of many grassland and open country species? We'll watch Red-bellied Macaws come into their night roost at Nariva and search the Atlantic shoreline for the bizarre four-eyed fish. We will spend time in the forest surrounding Asa Wright and take a visit to the most famous Oilbird cave in the world.

On Tobago we'll spend a day birding Gilpin Trace looking for Blue-backed Manakins and the rare White-tailed Sabrewing. We'll also take a day trip to Little Tobago Island, where Red-billed Tropicbird and Brown and Red-footed Boobies will be nesting. There will also be time to simply enjoy the sun, snorkeling, and sand right outside our hotel door.

Exact dates will be available soon. For more information please contact Simon Thompson at: Ventures Birding and Nature Tours, PO Box 1095, Skyland, NC 28776; 828-253-4247; www.birdventures.com; or Travel@birdventures.com.

Bird Clubs in the Carolinas

By Dwayne Martin

The **Foothills Bird Club** was founded in 1995 by Adam and Phyllis Martin and several local birders. Most members live in Catawba, Burke, Caldwell, and Alexander Counties.

Members helped develop a bird checklist for Riverbend and Bakers Mountain Parks in Catawba County and also provided feeders for both parks. The Club has monthly bird walks in the area and field trips most months. There are no dues; fund raisers are held when needed.

For more information visit www.geocities.com/foothillsbirdclub or contact Club leader, Dwayne Martin at redxbill@conninc.com.

Welcome New Members

Patrick C. Kennedy, Washington, NC

Thomas S. McNeil, Elizabethton, TN

Johnnie Simpson, Leland, NC

Christopher R. Wilson, North American Land Trust (NC Field Office), Boone, NC

Hickory Field Trip Schedule — September 19-21, 2003

Planned group field trips begin Friday morning. All trips meet in the hotel parking lot. Arrive at least five minutes before departure time with a full tank of gas, snacks, and beverages for half-day trips, and a lunch for all-day trips. Morning trips leave between 7-7:30 am and afternoon trips leave at 1 pm. Please note the all-day trip to Ridge Junction Overlook leaves at 5 am sharp.

Friday, September 19

Half-day morning, 7-7:30 am departure

- Trip #1 Glenn Hilton Park/Geitner Park
- Trip #2 Riverbend Park/Lower Lake Hickory
- Trip #3 Bakers Mountain Park
- Trip #4 Wagner Property
- Trip #5 Catawba River Greenway
- Trip #6 Lake Norman State Park
- Trip #7 South Mountains State Park
- Trip #8 Allyson's Woods

Half-day afternoon, 1 pm departure

- Trip #9 Glenn Hilton Park/Geitner Park
- Trip #10 Riverbend Park/Lower Lake Hickory
- Trip #11 Bakers Mountain Park
- Trip #12 Wagner Property
- Trip #13 Catawba River Greenway
- Trip #14 Lake Norman State Park
- Trip #15 South Mountains State Park
- Trip #16 Allyson's Woods

Saturday, September 20

Half-day morning, 7-7:30 am departure

- Trip #17 Glenn Hilton Park/Geitner Park
- Trip #18 Riverbend Park/Lower Lake Hickory
- Trip #19 Bakers Mountain Park
- Trip #20 Wagner Property
- Trip #21 Catawba River Greenway
- Trip #22 Lake Norman State Park
- Trip #23 South Mountains State Park
- Trip #24 Allyson's Woods

Half-day afternoon, 1 pm departure

- Trip #25 Glenn Hilton Park/Geitner Park
- Trip #26 Riverbend Park/Lower Lake Hickory
- Trip #27 Bakers Mountain Park
- Trip #28 Wagner Property
- Trip #29 Catawba River Greenway
- Trip #30 Lake Norman State Park
- Trip #31 South Mountains State Park
- Trip #32 Allyson's Woods

All-day Saturday, 5 am departure for Ridge Junction; all others 7 am departure

- Trip #33 Ridge Junction Overlook
- Trip #34 Blue Ridge Parkway/Boone & Blowing Rock Area
- Trip #35 Kerr Scott Reservoir/ Yadkin River Greenway
- Trip #36 Catawba County Hotspots
- Trip #37 Mahogany Rock Overlook



Nicole White Kennedy

Hickory Field Trip Descriptions

Half-day trips

Trips 1, 9, 17, 25 - Glenn Hilton Park/Geitner

Park. This is one of the best places in the North Carolina foothills to view fall migrants. On good days 20+ species of warblers, six species of vireos, and nine species of flycatchers can be found. Some species regularly found include Connecticut, Cerulean, Nashville, Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Orange-crowned, and Wilson's Warblers; Yellow-bellied, Alder, Least, and Willow Flycatchers; Merlin; Peregrine Falcon; Philadelphia and Warbling Vireos; Fish Crow; Gray-checked Thrush; Veery; Lincoln's Sparrow; Rose-breasted Grosbeak; and both orioles.

Trips 2, 10, 18, 26 - Riverbend Park/Lower Lake

Hickory. The 450-acre Riverbend Park along the Catawba River in northern Catawba County has only been a park four years, but has a checklist of over 160 species. The park has many varied habitats including riparian, upland pine and hardwood forest, and wetlands. Riverbend is one of the most reliable spots in the foothills to see Bald Eagle. Many migrants, as well as post-breeding wanderers, can be found along the river trails. The field trip will involve a large amount of walking, as there are 12 miles of trails in the park, though we won't walk them all. The park is also a great place for butterflies. Many county records have been seen, including Harvester and Great-purple Hairstreak. There are likely many more species to be discovered. We will also visit a couple boat access areas on the lower part of Lake Hickory to look for terns, gulls, and waterfowl.

Trips 3, 11, 19, 27 - Bakers Mountain Park. Bakers Mountain, a year-old park, is Catawba County's newest park, with a growing checklist of 108 bird species. There are five miles of trails, ranging from moderate to strenuous, but the hike to the top is worth the effort for the views from the observation platform. Hawks may be seen migrating from the platform. Peregrine Falcon and Golden Eagle have also been seen from atop the 1,800 foot mountain.

Trips 4, 12, 20, 28 - Wagner Property. This wonderful private property belongs to Jim and Carolyn Wagner, and they are gracious to let us bird here. One never knows what you might find on a visit during migration. The property borders the headwaters of the Yadkin River with bottomland, upland, field, and wetland habitat. Some of the birds found include American Bittern, Sora, Black Rail, Swainson's and Nashville Warblers, Philadelphia and Warbling Vireos, Bobolink, Lincoln's and Vesper Sparrows, Marsh Wren, many shorebirds, waterfowl, and migrating hawks.

Trips 5, 13, 21, 29 - Catawba River Greenway.

Located in Morganton, this scenic greenway follows the Catawba River for several miles. Many migrants can be found. There are also several fields along the way that may contain sparrows. Post-breeding waders, as well as early waterfowl, may also be seen here. Shorebirds may be found in the soccer fields near the greenway.

Trips 6, 14, 22, 30 - Lake Norman State Park.

Located along the banks of the "inland sea," Lake Norman State Park is a great place to see birds, since there are many different habitats. Migrating warblers, vireos, tanagers, post-breeding waders, and waterfowl can be found here. All of the southeastern woodpeckers (except Red-cockaded) can be seen. There is a large amount of walking, but it's mostly flat.

Trips 7, 15, 23, 31 - South Mountains State

Park. This beautiful state park is located 18 miles south of Morganton. It has all the feel of being in the mountains, without going up the escarpment. There are many trails where migrants can be found. Ravens are sometimes sighted. In good finch years, Pine Siskin can be seen dripping off the trees, even during fall. The scenery is spectacular. There are several waterfalls, as well as many wildflowers. The butterflies are some of the same species found in the mountains, even though the park is located in the Piedmont.

Trips 8, 16, 24, 32 - Allyson's Woods. This 1200-acre track of land is the largest unbroken track of land in Iredell County. It's also one of the few places where Kirtland's Warbler has been seen in North Carolina during fall. There are several ponds on the property, so a variety of birds can be found.

All-day trips

Trip 33 - Ridge Junction Overlook. The overlook can be a wonderful place for fall migration. Located in the Black Mountain Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway near Mt. Mitchell, the overlook is at the end of a "funnel." This makes it a great place to see hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of migrating warblers, vireos, tanagers, orioles, flycatchers, and grosbeaks. It is also an excellent place to find Red Crossbill and Pine Siskin. **This is a 90 mile one-way trip and must leave at 5:00 am sharp. Limited to 20 participants.**

Trip 34 - Blue Ridge Parkway/Boone & Blowing Rock Area. This part of the Blue Ridge Parkway is great for birding. Moses Cone and Julian Price Parks offer some of the best birding in the high country. Other spots include Valle Crusis Park, Rich Mountain Gap, and Thunder Hill Overlook for migrating hawks. Many migrants can be expected. Pine Siskin and Red Crossbill are possible.

Trip 35 - Kerr Scott Reservoir/ Yadkin River

Greenway. There are a series of accesses to this reservoir that are park-like. These accesses can offer excellent birding during fall. Many species of warblers, vireos (including Philadelphia), tanagers, flycatchers, and grosbeaks can be seen. Hawk watching can be done from the Mountain View Overlook near the end of the lake. The Yadkin River Greenway is a new greenway that runs along the Yadkin and Reedy Rivers. A variety of migrants can be found, as well as waders, such as Great Egret and Great Blue Heron. There are also fields along the greenway that might contain migrating shorebirds.

Trip 36 - Catawba County Hotspots. This trip will visit different spots in Catawba County looking for certain species of birds, as well as migrants. Some species we'll search for include Loggerhead Shrike, Eurasian Collared-Dove, various terns, and waterfowl at the boat accesses in the county. We'll stop by one of the sod farms in the county to look for shorebirds. We'll also visit a couple small parks to look for migrants.

Trip 37 - Mahogany Rock Overlook. Mahogany Rock Overlook is well known for hawk watching. Each year thousands of raptors fly over. The area around the overlook is also good for passerine migrants.



Records of **Barred Owls** nesting in the front quad on the UNC campus in Chapel Hill date back to the 1940s. This fledgling was photographed by Juan A. Pons on June 9, 2003.

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Carolina Bird Club Hickory Meeting Registration Form

September 19-21, 2003

Name(s) _____
(list each name separately for nametag)

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Evening phone _____ Email _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ for _____ member (\$10) registration(s) and/or _____ nonmember (\$20) registration(s).

Friday field trip choices # _____ / _____ Saturday field trip choices # _____ / _____
AM/PM AM/PM

_____ This is my (our) first time attending a CBC meeting.

Make check payable to Carolina Bird Club and send to: CBC, 11 West Jones Street, Raleigh, NC 27601-1029.



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Submission deadlines are due the 1st of January, March, May, July, September, and November.

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Rare Bird Alert: 704-332-BIRD

Website: www.carolinabirdclub.org

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